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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 11 THE HAGUE 000410

SIPDIS

STATE FOR ISN/CB, VCI/CCA, L/NPV, IO/MPR
SECDEF FOR OSD/GSA/CN,CP>
JOINT STAFF FOR DD PMA-A FOR WTC
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NSC FOR LUTES
WINPAC FOR WALTER

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TAGS: [PARM](#) [PREL](#) [CWC](#)

SUBJECT: CWC: MEETINGS OF SENIOR U.S. EXPERTS IN THE HAGUE
ON U.S. CW DESTRUCTION

REF: A. STATE 64170
[1](#)B. STATE 51992
[1](#)C. THE HAGUE 368
[1](#)D. THE HAGUE 352

Classified By: Janet E. Beik for reasons 1.4 (B) and (D)

This is CWC-36-09.

SUMMARY

[1](#)1. (SBU) During their June 23-25 visit to The Hague, Robert Mikulak (ISN/CB Director and U.S. Representative to the OPCW's Executive Council (EC)) and Tom Hopkins (Principal Deputy Assistant to the Secretary of Defense for Nuclear, Chemical and Biological Defense Programs) briefed representatives of the Technical Secretariat (TS) and a broad spectrum of other delegations on the U.S. program for destroying its chemical weapons (CW) stockpile (refs A-C), including projected operating schedules that go beyond the 2012 treaty deadline. Ref C gave an overview of the meetings held and highlights of reactions to the message conveyed during the visit. This cable provides more detailed reporting on each meeting. END SUMMARY.

MEETING WITH OPCW DIRECTOR-GENERAL

[1](#)2. (SBU) On June 23, U.S. Representative to the

Executive Council Robert Mikulak, Principal Deputy to the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Nuclear, Chemical, and Biological Defense Programs Tom Hopkins and Delreps met with OPCW Director-General (DG) Rogelio Pfirter to discuss initial feedback from the recent Executive Council (EC) visit to the U.S. and political management of the current U.S. chemical weapons destruction schedule. Mikulak opened by explaining the purpose of this visit of senior U.S. officials to The Hague in advance of the EC visit report being distributed, and listed several of the key delegations with whom the U.S. would meet later in the week.

13. (C) Pfirter commended the U.S. for proactive diplomatic management of the destruction deadlines issue, and advised the U.S. to speak with the delegations that had participated in the EC visit as soon as possible. He noted that the current draft report seemed balanced, and had even been skewed a bit too favorably toward the U.S. to allow room for negotiation amongst the visit participants. Pfirter then provided a bootleg copy of the draft report, and pointed out several key paragraphs, including one he had recommended, which clearly referred to safety as a requirement of the Convention.

14. (C) Pfirter went on to say that the U.S. plan to reach out to delegations was consistent with his

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own strategy to stay in close touch with ambassadors and maintain an accurate sense of key views on the issue. He emphasized the importance of the U.S. appointing an ambassador to the OPCW as soon as possible, noting that the combination of 2012, no U.S. Ambassador, and late payment of assessed contributions could seriously undermine U.S. credibility at the OPCW. He also acknowledged that an inability to meet its final destruction deadline could have broader implications for the moral authority of the U.S. on other non-proliferation issues. For the Secretariat's part, Pfirter said that he has instructed TS officials to respond to inquiries about 2012 by stating that they will not be able to fully assess the issue until the deadline of April 29, 2012, has actually been reached.

15. (C) Pfirter also shared his personal opinion that it will be critical to create and maintain a context where the 2012 deadline is important, but not perceived as the ultimate goal of the Convention. He noted that it seems a bit paradoxical that States Parties that have been members of the CWC from the beginning will in some respects be judged more harshly than those that come in later, for which deadlines can be established by the Executive Council. He added that Libya is not making good progress, and that Iraq will of course be a separate case) just two examples of the broader destruction context that exists. In any case, he stressed that U.S. commitment is clear, a fact that should be emphasized in any discussion. Pfirter noted that he had sensed a strong commitment to the OPCW and the CWC in conversations with Ellen Tauscher, Under-Secretary-of-State-designate, and with Gary Samore at the National Security Council, and had suggested that Tauscher visit The Hague at the earliest possible opportunity.

MEETING WITH EC CHAIRMAN AMBASSADOR LOMONACO

¶6. (C) Following the meeting with the DG, Mikulak, Hopkins and Delreps called on the new Chairman of the Executive Council, Mexican Ambassador Jorge Lomonaco. Mexican delegate Blanca Hernandez Polo also sat in. Lomonaco advised that the visiting EC delegation was actively engaged in editing the report and thought it would be ready in a week or ten days. He thanked the U.S. experts for coming and briefing delegations as the EC group did not want to become the messenger for the news of U.S. delays beyond the 2012 deadline. For that reason, the group had kept the draft report in close hold. Qthe group had kept the draft report in close hold. He described the EC group's approach to the draft as "practical" with "constructive criticism" in the group's conclusions.

¶7. (C) Lomonaco said that the U.S. "time to come clean" on the destruction dates was well chosen, but that it is not yet time for discussion of missing the deadline. He expected strong rhetoric

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on the deadline issue but not action, except perhaps procedural, on the part of delegations at this next Council. He noted that Brazil had called for discussion of deadlines twice in its national statement but that the ambassador had not discussed details or timing of such a discussion. He did not foresee extensive discussion of the EC representatives' report and said the group would strongly oppose any effort to revise the text of the report.

QUAD LUNCH

¶8. (SBU) Also, on June 23, Mikulak and Hopkins hosted a lunch for the French, German and UK delegations. In addition to Delreps, the lunch was attended by UK Ambassador Lyn Parker, UK delegate Karen Wolstenholme, German delegate Ruth Surkau, French delegate Annie Mari and French National Authority rep Franc Tecourt. Mikulak and Hopkins outlined the purpose and general schedule of their visit to The Hague and invited questions and initial thoughts on political management of the U.S. destruction deadlines issue.

¶9. (SBU) The conversation was collegial and constructive, with UK and German reps emphasizing later that their more probing questions were presented to assist the U.S. in preparing for interactions with less friendly delegations. Surkau in particular focused on immediate handling of the issue in the coming weeks and at EC-57. She also suggested looking at the broader context, as well as stressing accomplishments to date and not dwelling on 2012. Mari reiterated several questions from the French demarche made in Washington and The Hague several weeks ago (ref D), including how the U.S. intends to deal with the legal aspects of missing the deadline, whether an extension will be considered and the possibility of lifting the transportation ban.

¶10. (SBU) Of all participants, Parker offered the most long-term and strategic thoughts on how the issue might be perceived and managed closer to ¶2012. On the legal options, Parker described an amendment to the Convention as "unachievable" and also was hesitant to recommend a technical change to the Annex with the deadlines. Parker suggested that calling a special conference to deal with the

deadline issue would be premature before 2012 and noted that timing of the conference will be key. He also stressed the need to consider carefully what the desired result of such a conference would be before calling it. Parker noted that the dynamic will depend on whether the U.S. is the only focus or if it is broadened to include Russia. In the end, Parker said that selling a further nine years after 2012 will be difficult and that the way forward might include two parts: first, agreeing to increased, serious scrutiny of post-2012 destruction efforts, and second, overwhelming reaffirmation of commitment to the Convention.

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WEOG PLUS MEETING

¶11. (SBU) On June 24, Hopkins and Mikulak briefed delegations from WEOG, the non-WEOG EU, Japan and Korea on the U.S. schedule, program history and current efforts. The reaction was relatively mild, although Dutch Ambassador Pieter de Savornin Lohman reminded the U.S. of the need to strike a balance between its international obligations and local considerations; he also noted the broader deadline issue with other states likely not to meet their deadlines, and the impact on non-member states that may possess CW. For the most part, delegations seemed most interested in the legal and technical aspects of the delayed timeline and what they could do to help the U.S. manage the issue politically. Several delegates (France, Netherlands and the UK) had questions about U.S. legislation that prevented the transport of CW across state lines and asked if these laws could be changed and what impact transport of CW would have on the new timeline projections. The Czech delegate suggested the U.S. increase confidence building measures post-2012. The Irish delegate stated that it would be preferable to discuss this issue without specific reference to a breach of the CWC, at least not until 2012. The Italian delegate also warned that the U.S. should be prepared to deal with this matter at the next EC, while also preparing for longer-term implications.

INDIA

¶12. (C) Mikulak, Hopkins and Delrep met with newly arrived Indian Ambassador Manbir Singh on June 24, congratulating him on India's successful completion of its chemical weapons destruction. Singh stated that India had gone to great lengths to set up its National Authority under the Cabinet Secretary. He appreciated the opportunity for India's expert from Delhi to participate in the EC visit to the U.S. and expressed his thanks for this visit by U.S. senior officials in advance of the Council meeting and their efforts to meet with delegations. After Mikulak and Hopkins briefed him on the new projected schedules and reasons for delays in the program, Singh asked about the political complications in the U.S., how these could supersede treaty obligations. He stated that the announcement of the U.S. delays presents a difficult situation; the OPCW has been functioning well in a non-discriminatory matter, but a country not meeting international obligations that it had signed is not a good precedent. He asked what the U.S. plans to do about this and noted that his

QU.S. plans to do about this and noted that his government felt a "bit of pressure" might help the U.S. government deal with its local and environmental concerns. He said India would be constructive but that it would be helpful if the U.S. could accelerate the process. Mikulak

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responded that the Obama administration had increased funding already. Hopkins added that Congress had already requested the Department of Defense to find ways to accelerate the program; he noted the importance of the deadline in enabling us to reach where we are today.

¶13. (C) Singh, who had served in the Soviet Union as it disbanded, inquired about Russian progress on destruction. Mikulak replied that Russia had a late start but was working very hard to complete destruction with assistance from other countries. Singh also noted Chinese complaints about abandoned Japanese weapons. Mikulak noted Japan's delay in starting operations but also the technical difficulty in finding the buried CW, and the deterioration of those weapons.

¶14. (C) Singh inquired how India could help. Mikulak replied that we would appreciate ideas as the discussions continue, continuing the important OPCW tradition of consensus in solving problems that arise in the Convention.

CHINA

¶15. (SBU) On June 24, Hopkins, Mikulak and Delreps met with Chinese Deputy Head of Delegation Chen Kai and Chinese delegate Li Dong. In response to the information U.S. Reps provided, Chen Kai expressed appreciation for the transparency, and said that he personally had no doubt about the U.S. commitment to complete destruction of its chemical weapons. He noted that Beijing would need time to digest the news, and that he fully expected China would have specific questions and concerns. As an initial reaction, he asked how the U.S. believed the delay would be characterized; i.e. would it still be considered a breach of the Convention in 2012, despite demonstrated U.S. commitment? Chen Kai also wanted to know what measures the U.S. planned to take to redress the situation, both in the period leading up to 2012 and from 2012 until the end of the U.S. destruction program. He also reminded the U.S. that China has unique concerns because of Japanese Abandoned Chemical Weapons (ACW) on its territory, and expressed concern that the U.S. delay would impact Japan's efforts to destroy the ACW.

¶16. (C) Mikulak assured Chen Kai that the U.S. shares concerns about the impact of U.S. delays on other States Parties with destruction obligations. In response to a question about whether/when the U.S. would formally notify the Executive Council, Mikulak reminded the Chinese delegation that the U.S. dates are projections, and that the U.S. is working very hard to improve the pace of destruction. Chen Kai clarified that his concern Qdestruction. Chen Kai clarified that his concern about a formal notification stemmed from his belief that the issue should be addressed before 2012, as opposed to waiting for the deadline to pass. Mikulak noted that the Council might consider

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informal discussions in the period before 2012. Chen Kai responded that a forum for discussions may be valuable in venting some of the political rhetoric that will accompany any discussion of the U.S. (or other) destruction deadlines. In closing, Chen Kai recommended scheduling a bilateral meeting on the margins of EC-57.

RUSSIA

¶17. (C) On June 24, Hopkins, Mikulak and Delreps met with Russian Ambassador Kirill Gevorgian and Russian delegate Konstantin Gavrilov. Following the information U.S. Reps provided, Gavrilov, who participated in the EC visit to Pueblo and Umatilla, explained that there had been some confusion on the date of completion of the U.S. program. During the visit, he had understood that both Pueblo and Blue Grass would complete operations in 2017, in accordance with the Congressionally-mandated deadline. Given this internal deadline, Gavrilov noted that the news of the current projection of completion in 2021 was particularly problematic, and asked whether the U.S. would require an extension of this domestic deadline.

¶18. (C) Gevorgian acknowledged the tremendous efforts the U.S. has made in destroying its chemical weapons, but noted that the political and legal aspects of missing the 2012 deadline by so many years were not positive. He pointed out that Blue Grass, despite holding a stockpile of only 475 metric tons, had symbolic significance because of its very late completion date. He expressed particular concern that the U.S. inability to complete destruction by 2012 would adversely affect the efforts of Russian officials to convince the Russian government to maintain CW destruction by 2012 as a top financial priority. Hopkins agreed that it was critical to sustain a sense of urgency about CW destruction, and noted that the treaty deadline itself has already facilitated far more progress world wide than might otherwise have been achieved.

¶19. (C) In closing, Gevorgian stressed the importance of preserving the reputation of the CWC, and of maintaining an awareness of possible implications of U.S. delays for the broader disarmament dialogue.

LUNCH WITH EC OFFICIALS AND REGIONAL COORDINATORS

¶20. (SBU) On June 25, Mikulak and Hopkins hosted a lunch for regional group coordinators and EC leaders, including former EC Chairperson, Amb. Oksana Tomova (Slovakia), former African Vice-Chair, Amb. Benchaa Dani (Algeria), current African QChair, Amb. Benchaa Dani (Algeria), current African Vice-Chair, Amb. Abuelgasim Idris (Sudan), current WEOG Vice-Chair, Amb. Pieter de Savornin Lohman

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(Netherlands), Eastern European Group coordinator, Reen Liiwat (Estonia), and Asian Group coordinator, Kehkeshan Azhar (Pakistan). The tone of the meeting was positive and collegial, with all participants noting their appreciation for U.S. transparency and information to give a real picture

of the situation.

¶21. (SBU) While Idris said that the information has been talked about in the corridors for a while and is not news, he noted the importance of it being formally acknowledged now, although in an informal manner. Delreps responded that the informal nature of the information is due to its being based on projections and that this will remain the case until 2012. Azhar said that how delegations respond to the information will depend on whether the setting is informal or formal, suggesting that positions on the floor of the EC or CSP might have a different flavor. Idris also raised the need for serious discussions on how missing 2012 will affect other States Parties. De Savornin Lohman also noted that the issue is broader than the United States and suggested having a special conference to look at the role of the OPCW post-2012, to include remaining destruction, non-proliferation, etc. Azhar noted the need to handle the political aspect, particularly the question of compliance. Tomova raised the need to prepare the Organization, and the new DG from mid-2010, to deal with the issue.

BRAZIL

¶22. (C) In the bilateral meeting with Brazilian Ambassador Jose Medeiros and delegate Marcelo Ramalho, Medeiros asked Mikulak and Hopkins how the U.S. intends to announce the delayed completion of destruction. Mikulak replied that the U.S. is providing information on the projections and will continue to update the Executive Council. Hopkins explained the differences between the incineration program that is currently destroying CW and will be completed by 2012, and the two facilities under construction that will use new technology, extending their schedules beyond 2012. Medeiros inquired about the Congressional 2017 deadline; Hopkins responded that the legislation clearly stated the 2012 treaty deadline, but that if that were not possible, "at least by 2017." Medeiros responded that the news of progress is good but that the problem for OPCW is how to "multi-lateralize" it. He stated that his government had no question of U.S. commitment to total destruction but that it is important to preserve the Organization. Brazil understands the complexities of democracy, even if "some others don't." Qof democracy, even if "some others don't."

¶23. (C) Noting his recent national statement at the last Executive Council with regard to discussion of the deadline issue, Medeiros said he had no pre-determined objectives. He thought discussion would

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have to cover the U.S. timetable and to "compatibilize" the deadline with the objectives of the Organization. He suggested that beginning this discussion would likely be postponed until after the new Director General is selected in December. Noting that non-proliferation -- which has no deadlines-- is also an important objective of the Convention, he thought the discussion could turn into a positive one on the future of the Organization. He expressed appreciation for the Obama administration's statements on the importance of multilateral organizations and diplomacy and looked forward to working with the U.S. and others in a future discussion of the destruction

deadlines.

JAPAN

¶24. (C) On June 24, U.S. Reps met with Japanese Ambassador Minoru Shibuya and Japanese delegates. Shibuya noted that the OPCW community has been expecting for some time that the U.S. and Russia would miss 2012, and expressed appreciation for U.S. transparency. He added that this will undoubtedly be controversial at the OPCW, asked how the U.S. intends to handle the subject at EC-57, and suggested that appropriate report language might need to be agreed.

¶25. (C) Shibuya then asked how the U.S. views the issue of non-compliance with the treaty deadline. Mikulak replied that non-compliance does not occur until 2012, and that the U.S. is reaching out to many countries to develop a sense of possible solutions. There is no simple solution, and the legal options of an amendment conference or technical change have significant drawbacks. Japanese delegate Takayuki Kitagawa asked whether the U.S. believes a special session of the Conference of States Parties, as suggested by the Director General, would be appropriate. Mikulak stated that the U.S. would be open to considering this, but that the desired outcome would need to be clear.

¶26. (C) Shibuya did mention the challenge Japan was facing in destruction of ACW in China, but did not go into detail on Japan's schedule for destruction. In response to questions about others with whom the U.S. had met, Mikulak replied that the U.S. was consulting with many delegations from the EC, including members of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), as well as the Director General. Shibuya asked whether the issuance of the EC visit report would be considered an "official announcement" of the U.S. dates. Mikulak emphasized that the current U.S. schedule is a projection, and that the U.S. is doing everything possible to accelerate destruction.

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EU (CZECH REPUBLIC AND SWEDEN)

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¶27. (C) Mikulak, Hopkins and Delreps met with Czech Ambassador Petr Mares and delegate Jitka Brodska and Swedish Ambassador Hans Magnusson and delegate Jan Lodding on June 24, as outgoing and incoming representatives of the EU presidency. Mares had participated in the EC visit to the U.S. on behalf of the Eastern European regional group. He advised the U.S. reps that the report was nearly completed, with the conclusions still pending. Mikulak briefed the EU reps on the ongoing discussions, noting that it is too early for a formal discussion of missing the deadline. Hopkins detailed the new technology in the two facilities that will be destroying CW after 2012. Lodding (recently of the TS staff) inquired whether the U.S. announcement is formal or informal, and that questions will arise on when it will be time for a formal discussion. Mikulak responded that it would be premature at this time, but developing a consensus approach through informal discussion would be important in the months ahead. Lodding inquired about options

for the Organization in 2012 -- amending the convention, technical extensions, or the "Albanian solution." Mares noted that after 2012 it would likely not just be about the remaining U.S. stockpile, but others as well, and the future of the OPCW. Mares also noted that the EU reaches into three of the official regional groups, WEOG, Eastern Europe and Asia (Cyprus) which could prove useful for future discussions and coordination.

¶28. (C) Czech delegate Brodska followed up on the morning's WEOG-Plus meeting in which she had inquired about the transportation options, a question many delegations do not understand. Hopkins replied that it had become clear in their meetings this week that more details on the rationales behind some of the planning decisions on issues like transportation would help with delegations' understanding of U.S. constraints. Mares noted that information is a powerful tool, with his Swedish colleague advising not to rush discussions. All agreed to work together as the deadline issue unfolds.

NON-ALIGNED MOVEMENT (CUBA AND MALAYSIA)

¶29. (C) On June 25, U.S. Reps met with Cuban Ambassador and current Head of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) Ambassador Oscar de los Reyes, Cuban delegate Justo Quintero Mendez, and Malaysian delegate Mohamad Razdan Jamil (in Malaysia's capacity as former Head of the NAM). In response to the U.S. presentation, de los Reyes stated that Qto the U.S. presentation, de los Reyes stated that he was comforted by the confidence the U.S. expressed in completing destruction of its stockpile, but noted that there is still a treaty deadline to face, and that current projections mean that in 2012, only 70% of the world's chemical weapons will have been destroyed. He expressed concern that the U.S. might miss the deadline by nine years, but said that it was wise to wait until

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after the deadline had passed to make any judgment about compliance. De los Reyes also reminded U.S. Reps that destruction was a core obligation of the CWC.

¶30. (C) The Malaysian Rep asked how the U.S., keeping its potential breach of the Convention in mind, planned to offer assurances that it was doing everything in its power to fulfill its destruction obligations. Mikulak replied that the U.S. will continue to be transparent and to provide detailed updates on its destruction progress. He also noted that the ultimate goal of the Convention is complete destruction of all chemical weapons, a goal that will be achieved, and that it will be important to work together to maintain the Convention's credibility after April 2012.

¶31. (C) De los Reyes expressed his hope that the current global financial situation would not adversely affect the ability of the U.S. to accelerate and complete its destruction program. He asked how the U.S. expected the issue to be handled at EC-57, and wanted to know how other delegations had reacted to the U.S. news. Finally, he told U.S. Reps he would report the meeting in detail to the NAM.

IRAN

¶32. (C) On June 25, U.S. Reps met with Iranian delegates Hassan Vejdani and Ali Gholampour, who stated that they had not received official clearance to participate in the meeting, but wanted to fulfill their earlier commitment to Delreps to meet with U.S. officials. Upon hearing the U.S. information, Vejdani and Gholampour thanked U.S. Reps for their transparency, and said that they would send the information to Tehran for reflection. They reminded U.S. Reps that Tehran attaches great importance to the destruction of chemical weapons, particularly in light of Iranian experience as a victim of chemical warfare.

SOUTH AFRICA

¶33. (C) On June 25, U.S. Reps met with South African Ambassador Peter Goosen and delegate Marthinus van Schalkwyk. Because van Schalkwyk had participated in the EC visit to Pueblo and Umatilla, Goosen was well informed on the visit and the current U.S. schedule. His first question was how the U.S. saw Russia's situation; Mikulak replied that Russia had gotten a late start with its destruction program, but that the political commitment to complete destruction was there. Goosen then stated that, given the complexity of the U.S. destruction program, delays were understandable and there was no doubt as to the commitment of the U.S. to complete destruction of

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its stockpile. However, the question of how to deal with 2012 and the integrity of the treaty remained.

¶34. (C) In considering the way ahead, Goosen said that he did not believe further extension of the deadlines would be healthy for the Organization. In his view, discussions held in a positive atmosphere and proper management of the issue can prevent any possible crisis in 2012. Mikulak noted that many delegations had asked what the U.S. believes should happen, and added that it is not too soon to begin carefully considering the matter. Goosen stated that the EC will need to closely monitor destruction to ensure the pressure after 2012 to complete destruction is not lessened.

¶35. (U) Robert Mikulak and Tom Hopkins did not have an opportunity to clear this cable before their departure from The Hague.

¶36. (U) BEIK SENDS.

FOSTER